LEGAL AID ONTARIO Q4 REPORT

1. HEADLINES

JAN. 6

In LAO's annual client satisfaction survey, 83 per cent of respondants rated LAO services positively.

JAN. 8

LAO board approved new refugee and immigration panel standards.

FEB. 26

LAO provided $4.2 million in additional funding for a legal clinic service expansion strategy.

MAR. 12

LAO provided funding to Aboriginal Legal Services of Toronto for four *Gladue* report writers to work in southwestern and northern Ontario.

MAR. 17

LAO collaborated with east-end community legal clinics and with the East Scarborough Storefront to provide family law services directly to clients.

2. TIMELINESS OF SERVICE

TOLL-FREE TELEPHONE SERVICES

Whether a client is looking for information about legal aid services, the type of services they're qualified for or if they have questions about their legal aid application, they can call LAO's toll-free number for help in over 200 languages. Clients can access a wide range of general information, summary legal advice and applications for legal aid. Calls to LAO's toll-free call centre are streamed into one of two tiers.

Calls are streamed into two streams

STREAM 1	STREAM 2
Clients are matched to the appropriate service and referred to other programs.	Clients are assessed for financial eligibility, provided with legal information or referred to staff lawyers for legal advice in either family law, criminal law or immigration law. Clients can also apply for legal aid at this level.
53,106 calls were answered compared to 62,593 calls in Q4 last year.	**28,104 calls were answered** compared to 23,728 in Q4 last year.
Average wait time in Q4 was **8 min 37 sec.**	Average wait time in Q4 was **21 min 12 sec.**
Average time spent on a call was **6 min 37 sec.**	Average time spent on a call was **17 min 15 sec.**

SAME-DAY DECISIONS

Many of LAO's clients apply for legal aid assistance before their first court appearance. Seventy-seven per cent receive a decision on their legal aid application on the same day they apply.

77%

OF LAO CLIENTS RECEIVE A DECISION ON THE LEGAL AID APPLICATION THE SAME DAY THEY APPLIED.

Per cent of decisions made same day

	YTD MARCH 2014	YTD MARCH 2015
CRIMINAL	81%	80%
FAMILY	73%	68%
REFUGEE	68%	73%
OTHER CIVIL	91%	89%
TOTAL	**79%**	**77%**

3. SERVICE LEVELS

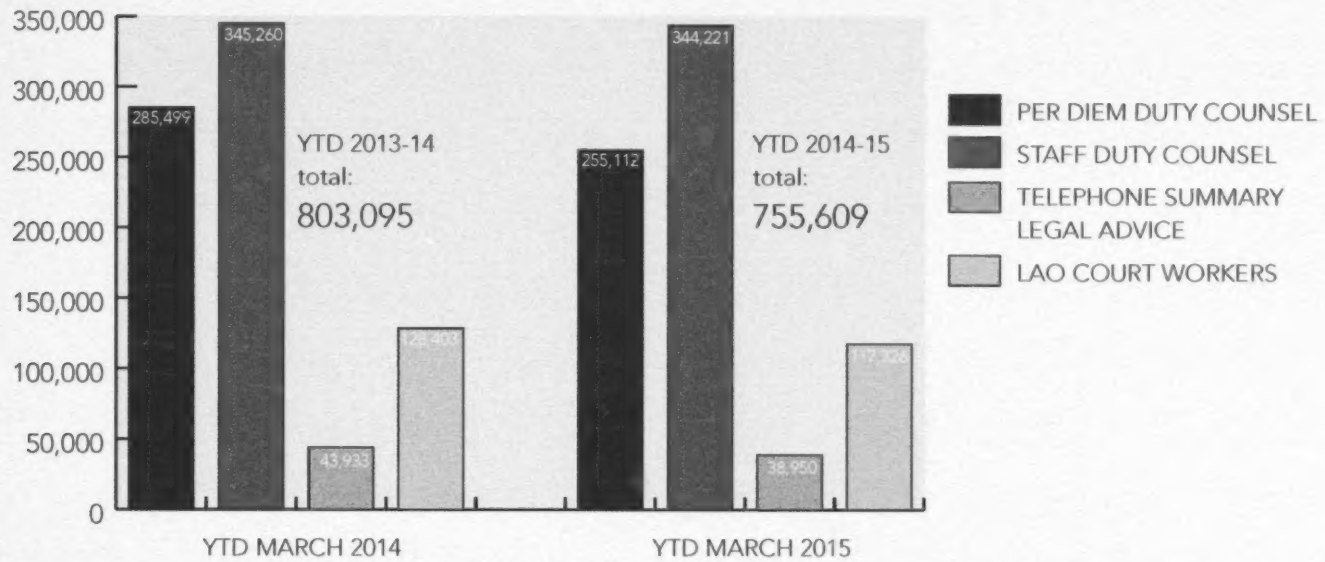
DUTY COUNSEL

Duty counsel are lawyers, available in most courthouses, who can quickly assess a person's legal problems and provide frontline advice, information and representation to people who would otherwise be unrepresented and unassisted in the courtroom.

As of the end of Q4, the total number of duty counsel assists (includes per diem, staff duty counsel, telephone summary legal advice and LAO court workers) assisted dropped by 5.9 per cent compared to last year. The decrease is consistent with the trend of fewer events being heard at courts.

Additionally, LAO's legal aid workers at the courthouse support duty counsel by providing certain services under appropriate supervision, so that LAO makes the most effective use of its per diem and staff lawyers.

Duty counsel total assists: YTD March 2014 / YTD March 2015



DUTY COUNSEL DISPOSITIVE SERVICES

Dispositive services are services performed by duty counsel that help to resolve a client's case as opposed to having the matter adjourned.

29,228 civil/family assists for YTD Q4 compared to 29,779 last year.

Civil/family dispositive services include:

- arguing emergency motions
- obtaining consent orders
- arguing motions/applications/adjournments
- supporting enforcement proceedings
- supporting inter-jurisdictional support hearings
- conducting *Child and Family Services Act* (CFSA) temporary care and custody, CFSA status review, CFSA apprehension
- conducting parole hearing or disciplinary hearings

82,590 criminal assists for YTD Q4 compared to 91,505 last year.

Some criminal dispositive services include:

- trials
- withdrawal of all charges
- guilty pleas/speaking to sentences
- *Gladue* submissions
- bail including all bail proceedings
- diversion/extra-judicial sanctions
- peace bond/recognizance
- hearings to rescind bench warrants
- mental health assessment order hearings, sentence reviews

CIVIL/FAMILY DUTY COUNSEL PROVIDED

29,228 DISPOSITIVE ASSISTS

CRIMINAL DUTY COUNSEL PROVIDED

82,590 DISPOSITIVE ASSISTS

4. PRIVATE BAR SERVICES

LEGAL AID CERTIFICATES

If a client is financially eligible and their legal needs warrant it, a client will be advised to apply for a certificate, which covers the cost of a lawyer.

The certificate is like a voucher, meaning that one of more than 3,600 private practice lawyers in Ontario who participate in the legal aid certificate program will be paid to represent an LAO client for a certain number of hours.

Certificates issued

	YTD MARCH 2014	YTD MARCH 2015	% CHANGE
CRIMINAL	54,949	53,067	3.5%
FAMILY	19,027	22,084	-13.8%
IMMIGRATION & REFUGEE	5,308	6,445	-17.6%
OTHER CIVIL	4,374	4,565	-4.2%
TOTAL	**83,658**	**86,161**	**-2.9%**

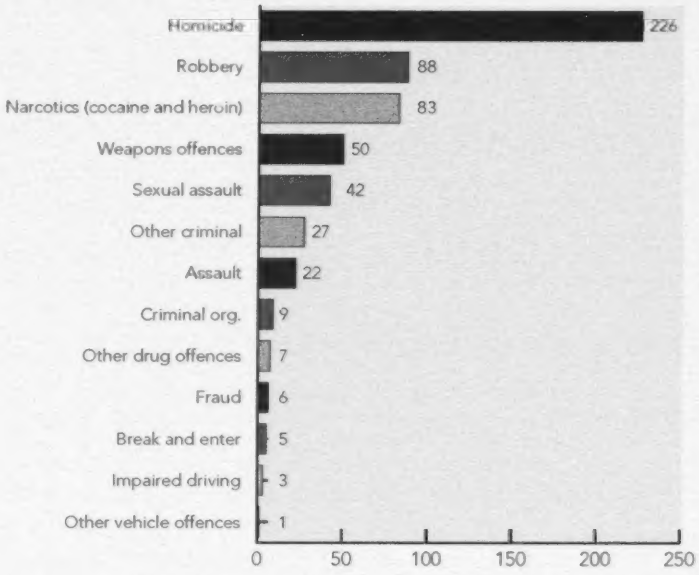
The Big Case Management (BCM) program governs the most costly and complex criminal trial defences funded by LAO.

Under the BCM program, LAO sets budget limits for criminal cases expected to cost more than $20,000. In these cases, LAO establishes individual budgets rather than using its standard tariff system to determine the maximum hours available to counsel.

LAO issued 569 BCM program certificates in 2014/15. The BCM program costs were $25.6 million for the year.

569 BCM PROGRAM CERTIFICATES ISSUED FOR 2014/15

Number of BCM certificates by category



5. FINANCIAL UPDATE

LEGAL AID ONTARIO: DRAFT UNAUDITED STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS FOR THE MONTH ENDED MAR. 31, 2015
ACTUAL ($ MILLIONS)

	YTD MARCH 2014 ACTUAL ($ MILLIONS)	YTD MARCH 2015 ACTUAL ($ MILLIONS)
OPERATING BUDGET ($M)		
Government of Ontario	345.55	347.55
Government of Ontario - 2013 new funding	4.69	9.14
Financial eligibility 2014/15 - funding		6.42
Law Foundation	25.62	29.18
Client Contributions	10.00	9.88
Client & other recoveries	1.12	0.76
Miscellaneous	1.07	1.23
TOTAL REVENUE	**388.05**	**404.17**
CORE BUSINESS EXPENSES		
Certificate program - BCM	25.56	25.56
Certificate program - Other	144.60	146.51
Client service offices	13.64	16.29
New family funding 2013/14	0.06	4.36
Clinic program	72.48	78.63
Clinic program - CIMS	0.03	1.52
New clinic program funding 2013/14	3.00	3.07
Duty counsel program	46.68	50.30
Service innovation projects	0.74	1.81
TOTAL CORE BUSINESS EXPENSES	**306.80**	**328.04**
Service provider support	5.31	5.79
Administrative expenses	32.30	34.98
Other expenditures	8.22	6.36
Program support	21.26	25.14
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	**373.90**	**400.30**
OPERATING SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	**14.15**	**3.87**